

THE
CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

VOL. I.]

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[NO. 6.

EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY JOSHUA T. RUSSELL.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

ON PRAYER—No. III.

IN passing on to review the relations of prayer as required by the law of christianity, it may not be unnecessary previously to remark, that the Bible tenders to us a special revelation from God. Its decisions are therefore to be received as *final*, from which no appeal can be made to any other tribunal. This we must take for granted, or it would be in vain to proceed. For, if the authority of God speaking in his word be disputed, we can have no definitive rule of judging on any moral question. The duties of man as a moral being must then be as various in their obligation and extent as are the conjectures and prejudices, the circumstances and habits of each individual. Consequently there will be no harmony of principle, of association, or of effort: because there will be no common rule of action. At least men will submit to no restrictions, excepting what civil government shall impose, in whose restraints they may choose for the common weal to merge some of their rights. Let it then be directly understood, that we consider God speaking in his word as legislating to the human *conscience*, against whose authority none may rebel, and to which every man is bound to listen and render implicit obedience.

Further.—It will not be wasting our time, nor prejudicial to our subject, to remark, that even on the supposition the principle we have advanced be false, yet it ought to be sacredly guarded even by the unbeliever himself: unless he can *demonstrate* its falsehood as with the clearness of a noon-day sun. And ont even then, unless he can substitute something better, or at least be sure that he is not demanding our credence to something *worse*. Though for myself, as far as my individual interests and feelings are involved, I might rejoice in the detection, yet Christianity has so completely encircled the institutions and relations of man, is so incorporated with all our habits of social intercourse, and by a secret though powerful influence, holds in check so many unholy passions, that the most stupid unbeliever, however ungraciously he may carry himself towards this poor race of fanaticks, might shiver with horrour in anticipation of the consequences that would ensue. It would be a revolution of no ordinary magnitude; disgorging desolation that would whelm alike the cottage and the palace, the cradle and the throne, the saint and the infidel; and unfurlingon the

black waters of Lethe the sail that would waft forever hence the happiness of man. Christianity itself, in that mighty revolution her heroes achieved, introduced the "sword," and left on the arena where they so nobly and triumphantly fought, many a bleeding, suffering, expiring martyr. But the angels of heaven guarded her trophies, and hailed the coming throng of kindred blood with the mysterious Immanuel. We breathe her blessings while we unfold her laws and eulogize her institutions. Not so in the case we contemplate. Christianity gone, would leave a blank which philosophy never could fill up. A gulf, deep and wide, would glide between us and the haven of rest, we never could pass.—We take it for granted then, that the Bible proffers a revelation from God, whose decisions are not to be questioned, and proceed in our discussion.

1. The first principle we advance, is, that prayer is an act of religious worship to be directed immediately and exclusively to God himself. The conviction of this has given a peculiar phraseology to all prayers we have ever seen or heard, and filled them with epithets, of high and holy import, expressive of the fact that we have come into the holiest of all, into the immediate presence of God.

The original Hebrew word translated *pray* or *prayer*, signifies in the first instance "*to make a separation between good and bad;*" thence, "*to judge, form an opinion on a distinct weighing of the circumstances;*" and thence "*to intercede, to mediate, to become a separator or mediator.*" This view is confirmed by the actual circumstances of man in relation to God, which we have before sufficiently described. Nor can we perceive any possible way of diminishing its importance, or becoming released from its obligation, unless relief can be obtained independent of such intercession.—But while it remains a fact that "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering," that "none can by *any means* redeem his brother," or that our "help is found" only in the Lord, all our intercession must be directed to him. For he alone can bestow the blessing it craves. Would I be wise to prefer my petition to a being, who, I knew beforehand, could not help me? Would the criminal supplicate pardon of a fellow or companion he had never injured, or of any but the constituted authorities of the country whose laws he had infringed?—The prayer of the sinner then, framed on any other principle and offered to any other being than the God whom he has offended, would be nothing less than a wicked mockery of his own sorrows in buoying up his spirit with a hope that can never be realized: nothing less than direct idolatry in ascribing the glory of that redemption to another, which is due to God alone. "Come unto me," saith the Eternal, "give me thine heart." And the act itself is defined as "coming boldly to the throne," "entering the Holiest by a new and living way consecrated for us;" pleading with God himself; as Abraham, Jacob, Solomon, Elijah, and others did, and were heard and answered.

God has said, his "glory he will not give to another, neither his praise to graven images." And his judgments have always succeeded when the wretched experiment has been tried. "O Baal hear us," vociferated his foolish Priests, "from morning until noon: Cry aloud;" said Elijah, "for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, until the blood gushed out upon them." Ah! penance with her bloody and painful rites, is the child of idolatry, the recommendation of prayers not offered "after the due order." Thus has experience taught us, and thus has human ingenuity supplied the deficiency. May our readers know and believe that "the Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God," and seek unto him only for life and salvation.

2. Prayer is offered immediately unto God as seated on a throne of grace. "He who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Such a conviction alone could inspire us with confidence, or enable us to "pay our vows" with comfort and hope. Would I draw nigh unless I believed God would hear me? Would I supplicate for blessings unless I believed he would bestow them? What reason, what inducement, would then enlist my affections, or cheer my desponding spirit? The scriptures instruct me to come "with boldness by the *blood of Jesus*, with a full assurance of *faith*" into the Holiest of all. Nay, the very nature of prayer itself leads us to utter an appeal in the hope it will not be rejected; and by the very permission to offer it, gives to the heart the cheering anticipation that it will be heard. Its very cry is to *mercy*, pardoning, redeeming mercy; the mercy of God in Christ; mercy in which my fathers trusted and were not disappointed. Nothing else ever did, nothing else ever will make me pray.

God in requiring the duty accompanies it with a promise which gives it all its worth and meaning. Has he commanded any of the seed of Jacob to seek his face in vain? No, no. "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." He constrains us to bend the knee by displaying his gracious condescension; wins our love by revealing his own; obtains our confidence by proclaiming his promise and his oath;" and teaches us to believe by giving a testimony worth believing: a testimony to his own grace; a testimony that exhibits him "as the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and in truth." With this he fronts the sacred page, and the sinner charmed delights to read. This he inscribes on the cross we bear, and the believer is appalled by no dangers, sneaks away from no conflict, attempts every duty, and "holds fast the confidence and rejoicing of his hope." O verily it is this that gives sweetness and solace to that hour of communion with God; this, which induces the christian to prefer to be "a door keeper in the house of God," rather than "dwell in the tents of sin;" and this which, while he enjoys it, assimilates him to the same holy image, and expands in

the tenderest benevolence on all around. The grace of God is our sufficiency and consolation: prayer fetches it into the soul; we are satisfied, and "go on our way rejoicing."

Moreover, our desires, cherished and expressed by prayer, anticipate blessings which we have forfeited by sin, while as sinners we have not a solitary assurance they shall ever be restored. The promise of the covenant is to our apprehension lost in the oblivion of the curse; the hope of life obliterated in death. Sin can command nothing, can suppose nothing but penalty; because the law it violates never hints any thing else. Mercy is entirely unsuspected until it is proclaimed. Adam in innocence knew nothing about it. The covenant comprised all his relations with God, but did not recognize this. The only example of sin, of which he knew any thing, if indeed he was informed of it (I allude to the fallen angels) exhibited nothing of the kind. It is altogether a new revelation, never supposed in the first covenant, and entirely different from it in nature. Had not the purpose of pardon been *revealed* immediately after the fall, had no scheme of redemption been devised or proposed by God himself, Adam had not thought of it: much less had the victim bled, the incense burned, or the petition been uttered. All ideas of mercy from God, and the whole influence of it as a moral attribute, now become incorporated with our civil and social institutions, are predicated upon the promise of God himself, and have thence been derived through the long ages that have succeeded, and in every form it has assumed. Hence, when a system of morals is inculcated, whose first principle is not "the shedding of blood" for "the remission of sin," prayer is an exercise of which its advocates are seldom guilty. Or if it command any attention, that is to be ascribed to better principles, which have their influence even while they are disavowed: to a mimicry which apes what it cannot equal: I then can never understand the institution of prayer, as a christian duty, unless it proceed on the distinct recognition of God, previously revealed as a God of grace.

Once more—Prayer is a *spiritual act*, and necessarily is the expression of *spiritual feelings*. These are produced only by the operations of that very system of which God is the authour as the God of grace. Faith, love, confession, humility, gratitude, are the fruits of the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ, and speak the praise of the glory of his grace. It therefore can never be properly performed without the recognition of God as in Christ reconciled unto us, and "reconciling us unto himself." This we apprehend is the true principle of all sanctification. For how a being, whose every faculty and affection and feeling are carnal, can perform an act truly spiritual, without that reformation which this very system of grace proposes and effects, is beyond our powers to perceive. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one," Prayer then as soliciting spiritual blessings to qualify us for spiritual action, addresses a God of grace, and lives upon his promises.

S. Prayer is offered immediately unto God as our *Father*.—We find all those regulations of life that are held most sacred among

men employed in the scriptures to explain the tenderness of God towards us. None perhaps more frequently occurs, than an allusion to filial affections and obligations. We would remark it as particularly connected with prayer. "After this manner pray ye," said Jesus: "Our *Father* who art in Heaven." This were enough, and we might safely leave our principle: but we have gone on with a fullness of discussion, and on this point have no disposition to shrink.

The part which Christ himself sustains in reference to our prayers, illustrates the principle we advance. "Through Christ, we have access to the father;" we "ask in his name," on the full conviction that the *Father* himself loveth us. He has ascended to intercede with His God and our God, His Father and our Father."—Again: The work of the Holy Spirit in prayer illustrates the principle: "Ye have received the spirit of *adoption*, whereby we cry, *Abba Father*;" (*Father, Father.*) Hence, he "bears witness with our spirits that we are the *children* of God: and if children, then, *heirs*; heirs of God, & joint heirs with Christ;" who, becoming a partaker of flesh and blood, because the *children* were partakers thereof, "is not ashamed to call them *brethren*."

Every relation of this kind supposed or expressed in the Scriptures, is intended to convey ideas of peculiar tenderness, and to have a reciprocal effect. The affection of a father instantly associates with itself in our minds the corresponding affection of a child. And prayer considered as the expression of such affection, is truly an interesting duty. It is no longer the sluggish, cold-hearted service of a slave; it is the mild, familiar, confidential deportment of a son. And if we mistake not, this is the particular point of contrast in the denominations of the spirit considered in his operations under the old and new Testament dispensations: "We have not received the *spirit of bondage* again to *fear*, but the *spirit of adoption* whereby we cry *Abba, Father.*" "We might also refer to the veil shutting out from the Holiest of all, whose destruction is realized in the rent veil of the Mediator's flesh." The difference is easily perceived, and the illustration of prayer strong and valuable. To draw nigh to God as a father, is a circumstance, a privilege of no ordinary moment. It inspires with confidence, and induces an importunity, which otherwise would be entirely out of place. It explains, and justifies, and urges that "*boldness*" of which the scriptures speak: it is natural, proper, and reverential, because it is filial.

If on this last article I may have expressed myself indistinctly, or not with sufficient fulness, let me refer my readers to a precept that includes all my meaning. "Pray to thy *Father* who seeth in secret, and thy *Father* who seeth in secret, will reward thee openly."

THEOPHILUS.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN.

Report of the Executive Committee for the management of the missions, first commenced by the Rev. John Wesley, the Rev. Dr. Coke, and others; and now carried on under the direction of the Methodist Conference.

(Continued from p. 70.)

IV. AMERICA.

WEST INDIES.—In presenting the state of this mission, the Committee cannot refrain from adverting to those charges, which in different publications and elsewhere, have been urged against the attempts, made by the Methodists and others, to christianize the negro slave population, of the West India colonies. Instruction has been represented as indirectly tending to produce insubordination; and the missionaries, as in some instances, the direct and zealous instigators of insurrection and disorder. The dreadful and lamentable catastrophe at Barbadoes, was attributed to these causes; and to make the deeper impression, it was pretended, that the slaves in the other islands were ready to follow the example; and that one necessary means of precaution against the apprehended evil, was to impose restrictions upon, or totally to prohibit the preaching, and especially the itinerant preaching of missionaries.

Such are the allegations, which have been urged against missionary labours, in those important dependencies of the British empire; and as far as they made their appearance in a late debate, on the Slave Registry Bill, in the House of Commons, they met with a sufficient refutation, in the full and honourable testimony, borne to the peaceable and proper conduct, and the useful exertions, of the Methodist and Moravian missionaries, by his Majesty's ministers. And the Committee feel themselves bound to acknowledge, in the most respectful manner, the prompt and able assistance, rendered by Joseph Butterworth, Esq. in Parliament, on the occasion. By his exertions, the attention of the House was called to those unexpected charges, which had been made on a preceding evening; and the whole issued in such explanations, on the part of those who, from insufficient, or misleading information, had expressed suspicions of the conduct of the missionaries, and such testimonies, on the part of his Majesty's Government, as must have convinced the publick, not only of the innocence of their demeanour, but of the connexion of their labours, with the civil improvement and happiness of the islands. The report of this parliamentary conversation, will be found in the Appendix (No. 3) and were any additional testimonies wanting, the Committee could easily adduce them. A number of planters, in different islands, have been regular subscribers to the mission, and have greatly encouraged, by giv-

ing every facility to the work; and some of the colonial legislatures, at different times, have enacted laws, favourable to the principle of communicating religious instruction to the slaves.

In proof of the favourable sentiments entertained by some of the planters themselves, as to the instruction of their slaves, the following incident may be adduced. At the formation of the Methodist Missionary Society, for the Bristol district, the Rev. W. Fish, and J. Taylor, having acted as missionaries several years in the West Indies, spoke particularly of the deplorable state of the negroes in those islands, previous to missionaries being sent amongst them; and the beneficial effects, resulting from their labours. Shortly after Mr. Taylor had spoken, the following letter was handed to the chairman, and read by him to the meeting.

June 18, 1815.

"REV. SIR—I, who am a holder of slaves, to the number of nearly 150, in the island of Barbadoes, and have allowed them to be instructed in the principles of Christianity, by the missionaries in connexion with you, have heard with great pleasure and delight, the sentiments of the meeting to-day. What I have just heard from Mr. Taylor, of the state of the negroes, in the island he laboured in, I can assure you, exactly agrees with the state of the negroes in Barbadoes, with this exception, that on my estate, through the zealous labours of the Rev. James Whitworth, they have been much moralized, and he has placed 14 of them in society. Knowing the necessity of missionaries being sent to Barbadoes, I do request, you will have my name entered on the subscription list for five pounds a year, which I will pay in London, or to the missionary on the island. With sentiments of real esteem,

"I am, Reverend Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"To the Rev. Dr. Clarke.

W. H."

The Committee can boldly assert, that none of the Methodist missionaries, in any of the islands, can justly be charged with preaching sedition and insurrection; on the contrary, *as they have been constantly instructed*, they have avoided all interference in the civil relations between masters and their slaves; have inculcated submission, diligence and fidelity, as essential branches of Christian morality; and have, in all cases, subjected to reproof, or excluded from the society, all who have failed in those duties. So established has been the character of the religious slaves for loyalty, that in some of the islands, under the apprehension of hostile invasion, Methodist and Moravian negroes have been employed for military purposes, to the exclusion of all others; and so fully has it been understood, in the West Indies, that the negroes taught by the missionaries, become superior to those, who are left in their Pagan ignorance and vice, in industry, sobriety, and faithfulness, that their price at the publick auctions has been greatly advanced,

by the statement of the fact, that they were religious negroes. For interesting anecdotes on these subjects, we refer to the Appendix, No. 4.

Evidence of this kind might be collected from every island, where the religious instruction of the slaves has been permitted; and so utterly unconnected was the insurrection at Barbadoes with missionary operations, that it is a fact, which well deserves notice, that they have been met there with more than usual resistance; that very little has at any time been done, towards the instruction of the negroes; and that at the time of the insurrection, and for many months preceding, there was no Methodist missionary on the island. The fair inference indeed from the whole view of the case is, and an inference not of friends only, but of enemies; (see Appendix, No. 5) that if the slaves of Barbadoes had been diligently instructed, and brought under the influence of the gospel, no such event would have taken place. The opposition which has at different times been manifested in the West Indies, to the communication of religious instruction to the coloured population, has never been able to ground itself upon a single instance of the pernicious tendency of knowledge and Christianity. Such a pretence can never be admitted, by any man who either understands the nature, necessary operation, and influence of truth and godliness; or has paid any attention to that mass of evidence, in favour of the effects of Christianity upon the civil quiet, and happiness of mankind, which has been rolled down the stream of past ages, for the instruction and direction of the present. To convert the enslaved blacks of our colonies, is no new project. It has entered into the plans of Christian philanthropists, both of the established church, and of other religious denominations. The Society for the propagation of the Gospel, and the Christian Knowledge Society, made this one part of their plans. It engaged the attention and deep concern of that excellent prelate, Bishop Porteus; and it is a work which will call into active operation the zeal and piety of British Christians, as long as the value of immortal souls is appreciated, and the political interests of the whole empire are rightly understood. An empire founded upon ignorance and vice, and which attempts to support itself by the worst species of exclusion, as to any part of its subjects (their exclusion from the privileges and blessings of its religion) is an empire without a root, and without foundation. It is unblest by man, and has no claim to the blessing of God: a column on the sand is a feeble emblem of its frailty.

The Committee, therefore, fully persuaded that in prosecuting the work in the West Indies, they are accomplishing the best ends of patriotism, as well as of piety, again commend this department of their missionary system, to the benevolence of the publick. The prejudices which have existed in some places, and among some persons, in the islands, against the instruction of the slaves, are gradually giving place to better views. Like the opposition formerly made at home, against the education of the poor; they must yield to more extensive experience, and a calmer consideration of the subject; and no-

thing is necessary, but a prudent and inoffensive perseverance on the part of the friends of missions, and a simple dependence on the Divine aid, to make their cause triumphant over the ignorance and vices of the children of Africa, and over prejudice and opposition themselves. The committee can vouch for the general character and peaceable demeanour of the missionaries; they are connected with no political party; they are even wholly unconnected with those great political philanthropists of the country, whose labours in the British Senate, for the amelioration of the state of Africa, and the condition of her sons, have crowned them with imperishable honours, and allied their names to the grateful recollections of succeeding ages. *They have no political object whatever.* Their work is wholly to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the vicious, and to save souls. To these sole exclusive objects, their attention has been constantly directed by the Committee; and if any of them have failed to prosecute this design, by all peaceable and inoffensive means, or mixed with it any other and foreign object, none can be found more anxious than the Committee, to obtain knowledge of the fact, and to subject the party to censure or recal. But the Committee know of no such facts; they believe that none such exists; and they can therefore, commend the missionaries employed in the West Indies, to the confidence and patronage of the religious public, as men who have made full proof of their ministry, "by *pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true; as poor, but making many rich.*"

On this subject, the Committee refer to the Appendix (No. 6) for a statement, drawn up by Mr. Dace, who spent 10 years in the different West India islands, as a missionary.

DOMESTICK.

First Report of the New-York Sunday School Union Society, for the year ending February, 1817.

(Continued from p.77.)

Among the benefits of the Sunday School system, the Committee would be wanting in fidelity should they omit to notice those which relate to the teachers. The duties of their office are such as obviously tend to the improvement of their whole character; and especially as they require the exercise of every good affection, they are suited to promote their spiritual interests, to assist their progress in the divine life, and to enlarge their capacity of usefulness and of happiness. Besides these effects upon those who entered the schools of this Union, under the influence of experimental piety, the Committee are bound, with gratitude and praise to God; to state, that consequences still more important have resulted to various other teachers, who, while endeavouring to explain

to their pupils the doctrines and duties of religion, have been strongly impressed with their own need of divine illumination and forgiveness; and whose convictions and anxieties have issued in their hopeful conversion to the love of God, and the faith and obedience of the gospel. Occurrences of this nature, familiar as they are in the history of Sunday Schools, merit to be thankfully recorded, and had in lasting remembrance.

In pursuance of a measure suggested in the Constitution, the Committee, at an early period, appointed a number of gentlemen visitors of the schools; an office which the experience of foreign Sunday Schools had proved to be of much importance. With these gentlemen, several others have since been associated. The schools have been visited as regularly as circumstances would permit; and the Committee have reason to believe that material benefits have resulted from this service.

The Committee regret that they cannot, without two much enlarging this Report, do justice to the gentlemen who have taught the schools, by detailing their exertions, and making extracts from their quarterly reports. Their voluntary, gratuitous, and persevering labours have, indeed, a reward, to which our praise could add nothing. Conscious of a better recompense, they will not regret our silence. The labours performed in these seminaries of virtue, meet no pecuniary return, gratify no unhallowed passion. Springing from that charity which vaunteth not itself, and aiming at those results which rarely gain the shouts of popular applause, they anticipate a heavenly benediction. But the example speaks volumes. Can any one conceive that so many persons, differing perhaps, on some other subjects, but united in this undertaking, should be unadvised in the tendency of their efforts? Will any one who beholds them in the practice of a singular self-denial, pursuing their object from the beginning to the end of the year, doubt whether the good effects produced are commensurate to the patience, the zeal, and the diligence exerted? Were it referred to the Superintendents and Teachers, whether these schools should be continued and enlarged, the Committee are well assured there would be but one voice. They are thankful for that Providence which has brought them acquainted with men engaged in these establishments, to whom the unlettered poor may look with confidence; men who would esteem it a privation and a hardship to be debarred the privilege and the satisfaction which they derive from their Sunday School engagements.

The Committee have to report that they have caused the following books and lessons to be printed for the use of the schools, viz.

500 Alphabets.

2000 copies of Small Lessons.

250 sets of Large Lessons, 37 in each set.

3300 Spelling-Book, Part I.

2500 do. do. II.

500 do. do. III.

- 1100 Class Papers.
16000 Tickets for Punctual Attendance and Good Behaviour.
3000 copies Watts' Divine Songs.
500 do. Hints on the establishment and regulation of Sunday Schools.
75 Numerical Registers.
2500 copies of The Young Cottager, abridged, for rewards.
2500 do. of The Orphan, and other pieces, for the same purpose.
The Committee have also published besides, some smaller articles,
1000 copies of the Constitution of the Society, with the rules of the schools.
500 do. of Proceedings of the First Quarterly Meeting.
10000 do. of an Address to Parents.
1500 do. of a Circular on the subject of Sunday Schools.

A considerable quantity of books and lessons are still on hand. Sales have been made for the use of schools in other places, to the amount of about 200 dollars; a part only of which has been paid. A few copies of the Society's publications have been gratuitously forwarded to particular schools in the country.

The Committee have purchased 760 Testaments, all of which have been used in the schools; and they are happy to add, that a donation of 25 Bibles has been received from the New-York Auxiliary Bible and Prayer Book Society.

The Committee would gladly make the most publick acknowledgments to those gentlemen who have gratuitously furnished rooms for the accommodation of the schools, and to all who have in any way assisted in the operations of the Society.

It is obvious, that the expenditures of such an establishment are liable to be greater during the first year, than afterwards. The schools are now supplied with books, which, with small occasional additions, will serve them for a considerable time to come. Still the Committee are concerned to say, that they fear the regular dues from the present annual subscribers will be inadequate to the support of the institution. While with feelings of peculiar satisfaction and gratitude they refer to the extended list of life subscribers, and other donors, who have generously patronised the object, and replenished the treasury of the Society, they are aware that dependence must be placed ultimately on the permanent support of annual contributors. But should the merits of the enterprise in which this institution has embarked, be fully developed to the public, the Committee are persuaded, that a want of pecuniary aid would never be a subject of anxiety. For who that considers the nature and tendencies of the Sunday School system, the high ascendancy it has gained in the land that gave it birth, or the effects it has produced during a period of nearly forty years; and that knows the characteristics of the age in which we live, will doubt whether the object of this Society shall meet with patronage? Or who that has

traced the progress of this system from Gloucester, where it was contrived by the venerable Raikes, to every city and village in Great Britain, to the principal places in the neighbouring islands, to the continent, to Africa and India, to the West Indies, Nova Scotia and Canada; and finally, to this City, and hence to an hundred places in the United States, will doubt whether it rests upon a solid basis, or shares the fullest approbation and confidence of every enlightened community? Need it be stated, that this admirable system prepared the way for, and indeed originated that Society whose offspring are now the glory of every land, and whose mighty operations, when her progenitor shall have removed the darkness and ignorance which obstruct them, are destined to renovate the nations? He who would be an enemy to Sunday Schools, must oppose armies enlisted to disseminate the Scriptures; must encounter the energies, and resist the purposes and feelings of the civilized world; while he who would be thought a friend to Bible Societies, will not be backward to approve the object of this Association. Were it the highest praise of Sunday Schools that they open channels for the waters of life, and expose the furrowed soil to the dews of heaven, it were enough to repay the labours bestowed upon them. But they afford the means of cultivation; they plant, they rear the harvest. They apply their moral enginery to materials which are ductile. They aim to educate the heart, to give the conscience its empire, to form the manners, to regulate the conduct. Nor is their application or their efficacy confined to children. They claim human nature as their province. They hold up to the world a discovery which human wisdom is reluctant to admit; that man, depraved, ignorant and vicious, can be governed, subdued and reformed, only by gentle and affectionate methods; that ignorance and its train of obstinate passions will yield to the assiduities of Christian kindness; and that the most hopeless, when educated as beings formed for religion and for another world, will learn to act like rational and accountable creatures.

The Committee would be less forward in these remarks, did they believe the importance of Sunday Schools was appreciated by the publick. When they find that, upon examination in a foreign country, it appears that of those who suffer for capital crimes, not one in ten can read; and, on the other hand, that out of thousands educated in a Sunday School, not one was ever convicted before a magistrate; when they find that Sunday Schools, in the country where their effects are fully seen, are regarded by legislators and princes as combining the most efficient means of counteracting in the aged poor, and preventing in their children, the innumerable evils which spring from ignorance and want; that idleness, larceny, mendicity, and the various forms of wickedness perpetrated by the lower classes of society, disappear where these institutions are properly supported, they cannot but be anxious that the importance of the system should be felt. They trust it will be felt. They rejoice that the plan has been adopted in this city upon so liberal a scale; and that the labours of this, and the sister institu-

tion, have been such, and such the visible effects operated by the Schools, as to have attracted attention from every part of the country. They desire with devout and humble reverence, to acknowledge the Divine goodness, in the success which has attended their endeavours. And they congratulate the Society on what has been accomplished, and on the prospect opened before them. They deem it matter of cordial felicitation, that perfect harmony has pervaded the councils and measures of the Institution, and shed its salutary influence on the Schools. They hail this as a pledge of more extended and more efficient efforts in a cause, which interests and benefits the heart, in proportion as it occupies the hands.

(Conclusion in our next.)

MISCELLANEOUS.

COMMUNICATED.

MATTHEW, CHAP. V. VERSE 8.—*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

The state of mind that this passage of Sacred Scripture calls for in man, (which is alone a necessary qualification for endless felicity,) is not an inherent quality; but is to be sought after, and when obtained, to be held in possession by that exercise of soul that we are to continue in until the curtain of time shall fall, and close the scene of action here below.

That frame of mind alluded to in this passage, teaches man to love that being who is superlatively great above every sublunary object; and to render that degree of adoration to him for all his benign benefits bestowed upon his unworthy head, from the earliest period of his existence to his present state of being.

His neighbour to love as himself.
His brother in Christ to esteem,
As being more worthy than him.
To act justly toward all mankind;
And manifest mercy in love,
And humbly to walk before God.

The man who thus delights in all the ways of his Lord, not only enjoys a heaven on earth, but is prepared to leave the world when the strong armed monster (death,) shall summon him to appear before his Father and his God, to rest with him forever in endless fruition, where all his troubles will be at an end. Blessed indeed is the man whose mind is thus exercised, and who is in this state of preparation to meet his Lord at his coming. And no man can be said to enjoy true happiness without living in the enjoyment of these virtues, and in the full possession of the love of his blessed Redeemer. The man that is in this state of preparation for death and judgment, will find Jesus to be with him through the valley and shadow of death, to comfort and preserve him in this trying moment, from the power of him who goeth about like a roaring lion,

seeking whom he may devour—Satan, the prince and power of the air, the deceiver of the souls of men. But if the pure in heart are only to see God, how will the sinner appear before that being who vieweth sin without the least degree of allowance, at that great and awful day when the secrets of all men shall be laid before the world, then assembled at the sounding of the last trump; when all men, both great and small, shall appear to receive their rewards and punishment—he will acknowledge his crimes; but alas! it will be too late: then take warning sinner, whilst thou hast time to repent, and secure thy everlasting peace before it is too late; do not delay, and thou wilt be admitted into the rest prepared for all the faithful.

Happy the man, and happy him alone,
Who has sought and found the everlasting son;
Jesus the prince of peace.

PROVIDENCE (R.I.) May 30.

Extract of a letter from a young gentleman in Virginia, to his friends in this town.

“When we arrived at Fredericksburgh, we found that the session of the Episcopal Convention had just commenced. I attended Church twice each day for a week, which was the length of session, where I heard preaching which I am sure has not been excelled in eloquence and zeal (would I could say in effect) since the apostolick age. We had there another Paul: now a Paul in religious eloquence and in enthusiastic devotion to the service of God, as he was formerly a Paul in wickedness, and in mad opposition to the truths of the Gospel. I must tell you his story. He was a native of Virginia, a man of family, fortune, and education, and emphatically a “man of the world.” He had a slave of pious disposition, who had been taught to read, and was in the habit of collecting the blacks in the neighbourhood, for the purpose of reading and explaining to them the Scriptures, and of prayer. This coming to R. C.—’s knowledge, the slave was ordered to be severely flogged; and was, at the same time, forbidden to preach, or to hold meetings again, on pain of severe punishment. As he was riding home one evening soon after, he passed a cabin, where he heard the voice of his slave as engaged in prayer. He dismounted in high displeasure, and with his whip in his hand, went to the door, where pausing, he heard the poor negro fervently praying *God to forgive his master, even as he forgave him.* The prayer was heard; conviction seized the sinner; and he sunk pale and trembling upon his knees, joining the astonished negroes in earnest prayer to God for forgiveness. He has been preaching about twelve months with astonishing success.”

NEW-YORK, May 20.

The General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, consisting of the House of Bishops and the House of Lay Deputies, closed their triennial session at a

late hour on Tuesday evening last. It will afford much pleasure to our readers of that communion, to learn, that on this occasion, the venerable Bishops of the Church were all present, and that the attendance on the part of the other house was more numerous than on former occasion. The report of the state of the Church at large was peculiarly flattering. Among other acts of importance the Convention have determined upon the establishment of a General Theological Seminary for the education of persons to the work of the ministry. This institution will be located in this city. The next meeting of the General Convention will be held in Philadelphia.

ANECDOTE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN.

It is recorded of the apostle John, that after the death of the emperor Domitian, who had banished him to Patmos, he returned from that solitary isle, and governed the Asiatick churches. There he remained till the time of Trajan. At the request of the bishops he sometimes went to the neighbouring churches, partly to ordain pastors, and partly to regulate the congregations. At one place in his tour, observing a remarkably handsome young person, he warmly recommended him to the care of a particular pastor. The young man was baptized, and for a time lived as a Christian. But being gradually corrupted by company, he became idle, intemperate, and at length so dishonest as to become a captain of a band of robbers. Some time after, John had occasion to inquire of the pastor concerning the young man, who told him that he was now dead to God, and inhabited a mountain over against his church. John, in the vehemence of his charity, went to the place, and exposed himself to be taken by the robbers. "Bring me," says he, "to your captain," who beheld him coming. As soon as he knew the apostle, he was struck with shame, and fled. The aged apostle followed him, cried, "My son why fliest thou from thy father unarmed and old? Fear not, as yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe me, Christ has sent me." Hearing this the young man stood still, trembled, and wept bitterly. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back to the society of Christians, nor did he leave him till he found him fully restored by Divine grace.

Major John Pinkerton, has left 8000 dollars for the support of the gospel in Londonderry; and 12,000 dollars, as a fund to the academy in that town by the name of Pinkerton Academy.— *Lon. Pap.*

A NIGHT IN A STAGE COACH:

BY MR. MONTGOMERY.

Being a meditation on the way between London and Bristol; written upon a recent visit to his brother in Bristol.

I travel all the long, long night,
By ways to me unknown;
I travel, like a bird in flight,
Onward, and all alone.

In vain I close my weary eyes,
They will not, cannot sleep,
But, like the watchers of the skies,
Their twinkling vigils keep.

My thoughts are wand'ring wild and far, Upward to him my spirit tends—
From earth to heaven they dart; But worships God alone.

Now wing their flight from star to star,
Now dive into my heart. [star, O that on me, with beams benign,
His countenance would turn!
I too should then arise and shine—
Arise, and shine, and burn.

Backward they roll the tide of time,
And live through vanish'd years;
Or hold their "cocoquy sublime,
With future hopes and fears,

Then passing joys and present woes
Chase through my troubled mind;
Repose still seeking—but repose
Not for a moment find.

So yonder lone and lovely moon,
Gleams o'er the clouds gone by,
Illumines those around her noon,
Yet westward points her eye.

Nor wind nor flood her course delay,
Forward I see her glide;
She never pauses on her way,
She never turns aside.

With anxious heart and throbbing brain.

Strength, patience, spirits gone;
Pulses of fire in every vein—
Thus, thus I journey on.

But soft! in nature's feeling hour,
Up springs a breeze—I feel
Its balmy breath, its cordial power—
Its power to soothe and heal.

Lo! grey, and gold, and crimson
The gorgeous east adorn,[streaks,
While o'er the empurpled mountain
The glory of the morn! [breaks,

Insensibly the stars retire,
Exhal'd like drops of dew;
Now through an arch of living fire,
The sun comes forth to view.

The hills, the vales, the waters burn,
With his enkindling rays;
No sooner touch'd, than they return
A tributary blaze.

His quick'ning light on me descends,
His cheering warmth I own;

Upward to him my spirit tends—
But worships God alone.

O that on me, with beams benign,
His countenance would turn!
I too should then arise and shine—
Arise, and shine, and burn.

Slowly I raise my languid head,
Pain and soul-sickness cease;
The phantoms of dismay are fled,
And health returns and peace.

Where is the beauty of the scene,
Which silent night display'd?
The clouds, the stars, the blueserene,
The moving light, the shade?

All gone! the moon, ere while so
Veil'd in a dusky shroud, [bright,
Seems, in the sun's o'er pow'ring
The fragment of a cloud. [light,

At length I reach my journey's end;
Welcome that well known face!
I meet a brother and a friend,
I find a resting place.

Just such a pilgrimage is life,
Illur'd from stage to stage;
Our wishes with our lot at strife,
Through childhood to old age.

The world is seldom what it seems;
To man, who dimly sees,
Realities appear as dreams,
And dreams realities.

The christian's years, though slow
their flight,
When he is call'd away,
Are but the watches of a night,
And death the dawn of day.

He sees o'er his expiring eyes,
While forth his spirit springs,
The sun of righteousness arise,
With healing in his wings.

When I shall reach this journey's
end,
O! may I find, through grace,
In Christ, a brother and a friend,
In heav'n, a resting place!

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